

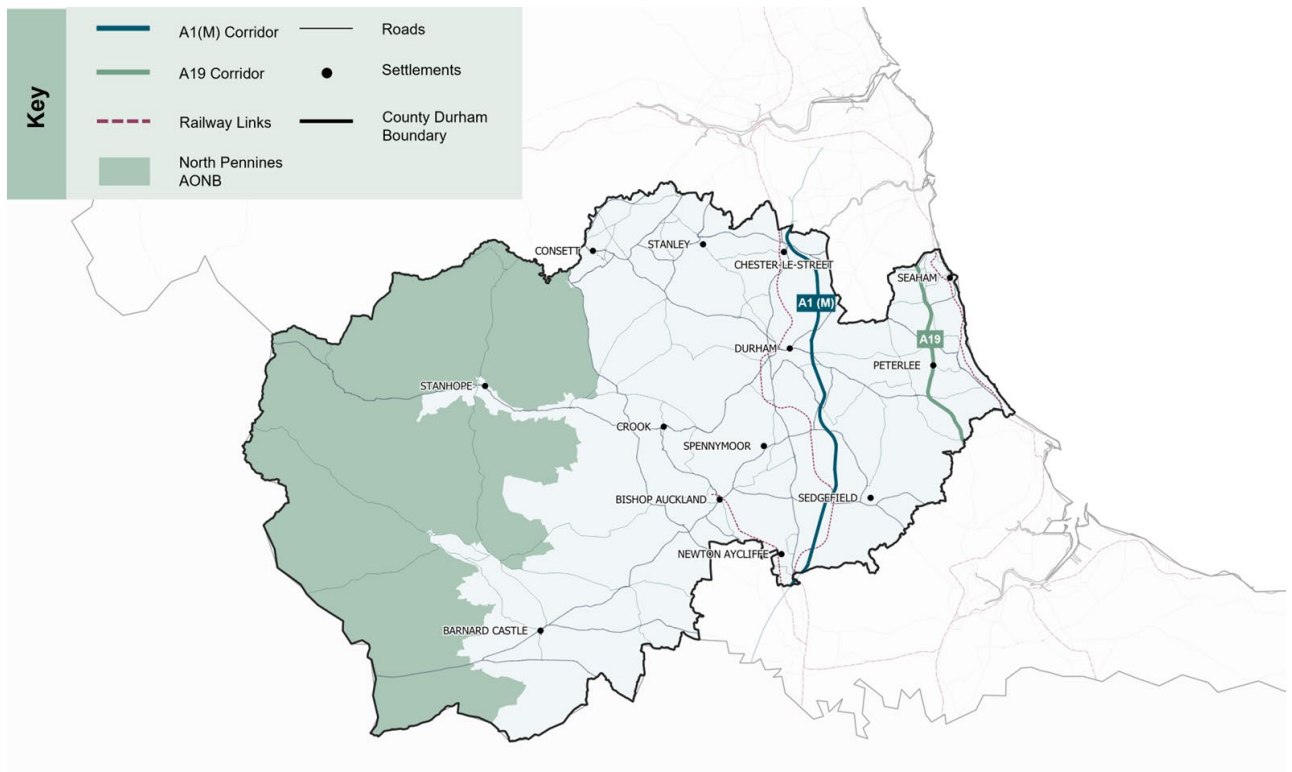


Better for everyone

Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022 – 2035

**Inclusive and green County
Durham: a sustainable
economy for a diverse county**





County Durham Economic Partnership

This strategy has been developed by the County Durham Economic Partnership. The Partnership has representation from the private sector, voluntary and social enterprise, statutory agencies and elected representatives from Durham County Council that work together to drive a common purpose and ambition for economic development and regeneration activity in County Durham. As a business led partnership the Chair and Vice Chair are elected from the private sector.

Contents

Foreword.....	4
Economic vision for County Durham.....	5
Executive Summary.....	7
1 Introducing the Inclusive Economic Strategy.....	10
2 Economic performance.....	13
3 What we heard in the Big Econ-versation.....	21
4 Our focus.....	23
DELIVERING OUR ECONOMIC VISION.....	24
5 People.....	24
6 Productivity.....	28
7 Places.....	32
8 Promotion.....	36
9 Delivering our Strategy.....	39

Foreword

We are delighted to present our first Inclusive Economic Strategy, which has been co-developed with local businesses, community organisations, young people, and residents. It is a long-term and ambitious strategy which is realistic and deliverable.

Our collective vision is for 2035 is for more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy. We want to make sure there are more jobs in all parts of the county so that there is a better range of career opportunities. We want to improve the quality of jobs so that wages are higher and fewer families live in poverty. We want the county to offer the same opportunities as other places in the country and catch-up with national rates of growth. We want to make sure that everyone can contribute to improvements and benefit from them. We also need to keep responding to the global challenge of climate change by reducing our environmental impacts but also take advantage of new innovation, business, and job opportunities.

The size of County Durham is a key strength and we have cutting-edge strengths in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and satellite technologies. During the development of the strategy, discussions with partners show that there is a strong feeling that together we can create more opportunities for young people, residents, and businesses to achieve their ambitions. In order to have a successful economy we need to continue to improve our foundations for growth by helping people to learn and develop new skills, be healthier and happier, have supportive communities, and live in good quality places. Together we can ensure County Durham has a thriving economy that realizes its full potential.

This strategy belongs to all of us, and we need everyone to play their part in delivering improvements. We will be asking partners to commit to this strategy, take responsibility for delivering improvements, and develop new partnerships that support the strategy. There are many challenges that we need to tackle and in the coming years, but we will maintain a focus building a stronger economy for generations to come and achieving our vision.

Economic vision for County Durham

Our overarching vision for 2035 is that County Durham is a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long, healthy and independent lives, and our communities are well connected and supportive.

The key to delivering this vision and an inclusive economy for County Durham is to have a clear, bold and ambitious economic vision for the future, developed in partnership, and to which all our partners have signed up to deliver. This long term economic vision for County Durham in 2035 balances our need to grow whilst achieving prosperity for all. At the same time as responding on the immediate challenges in front of us, we are focused on building a stronger County Durham, one where everyone realises their ambitions in a modern green economy firmly focused on the future.

In achieving our economic vision we will have strengthened the existing strong partnership working in the county, with agile support for businesses, residents, and places to transform the economies in all our communities. This will be a catalyst that mines our assets and history in new and imaginative ways, delivering recovery and renewal rooted in our place to reconnect people, places, history, culture, and land.

By 2035 County Durham will be a sustainable, inclusive economy with a diverse range of jobs to meet all skill levels, with targeted training and learning programmes tailored to our employment specialisms and needs of business.

At the heart of our strategy is innovation. County Durham has been at the forefront of economic progress for generations, producing the fuel, power and materials that drove the industrial revolution. Our economy has continued to adapt and evolve to become a leader in advanced manufacturing and space and satellite applications. County Durham is currently seizing the opportunities of green technology and our mining past to use the landscape to provide new sustainable energy to power our future growth.

We have a world leading university that will continue to attract international research and development, headquarters and talent to the county. We will harness our proud industrial heritage, skills, and employment land to manufacture the products of our innovation. This will allow us to create high value jobs and skilled and aspirational pathways for all our communities.

Innovation is so much more than just the work of higher education. Our strength will continue to be the innovation that takes place in all our businesses - from small independents to big multinationals. We will support our businesses to be at the forefront of research and development, to increase productivity, to fuel growth, and to create more and better-quality jobs.

It is these better-quality jobs that will raise the aspirations in all our communities, and particularly our young people. There is no greater impact on people's health and well-being than access to good quality housing, education, training, and meaningful employment. Overcoming barriers for those in poor health will not only improve the quality of people's lives but will allow the county's economy to thrive.

We will focus on the barriers that individuals face by taking a person-focused approach that incorporates targeted skills training. We will raise educational

attainment and improve health outcomes. And we will improve the County's transport network and infrastructure to support employment opportunities while homes across the County will be digitally connected to embrace the new opportunities of home and hybrid working. The job market will also offer more flexible and part time roles that fit around people's daily lives and circumstances.

To maximise the benefits of economic growth we will target key areas of opportunity, including research and advanced manufacturing, focused on our emerging green jobs, electronics, digital and creative, fintech, life sciences and satellite applications sectors. Inward investment will also be directly focused on these specialisms and ecosystems to create sustainable supply chains and jobs across the county and beyond.

A strong County Durham needs to look beyond its boundaries, and will benefit from a strong, integrated, collaborative North East. County Durham has the potential, skills, and natural resources to be the economic driver of the whole region. Our key A1(M) and A19 corridor, with unrivalled road and rail travel links to both the north and south, and the improved A66 connecting east to west, will provide more jobs in a range of sectors on key strategic employment sites. And we will support our large rural communities to diversify, driving forward digital and mobile connectivity to support home working and remote access to high-value employment that can underpin local services and successful resilient places.

Our celebrated heritage, natural beauty, high quality tourist attractions, and our people will attract investment for growth in the visitor economy, creating more quality jobs in the high spend overnight stay tourism. And our investment in tourism will be both sustainable and respectful of our communities, ensuring visitors underpin our uniquely beautiful Durham city and vibrant towns, villages and landscapes that support jobs and local services for our residents.

Executive Summary

The County Durham Economic Partnership is delighted to present County Durham's first Inclusive Economic Strategy, codeveloped with and for residents, businesses, and the voluntary and community sector. It has been a year in development. It builds on the 2021 Economic Review and Economic Statement; since then, over 3,000 residents, businesses and organisations contributed through the Big Econ-Versation, suggesting ideas and priorities to help the county accelerate towards an inclusive and green future.

We have strong economic foundations. In 2022 our new green economy is growing; we are developing specialisms in emerging sectors like fintech and advanced materials, our global university is expanding, our cultural industries are emerging, and partners are committing investment to ensure our creative potential is realised.

This is not a traditional economic strategy. We have designed the strategy to be inclusive – ensuring that all our residents can benefit from and contribute to prosperity and growth through secure work and good pay. We start this strategy with a bold 2035 economic vision to create a step change in the county's economic future and we finish with a commitment to support those who face additional barriers to inclusion. This will create County Durham's inclusive economy.

At the heart of this strategy is a clear ambition: **more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy**.

- **More jobs**, in the county's broad business base.
- **Better jobs**, to ensure that residents can access secure work that pays fairly.
- **Inclusive**, to ensure that the benefits of growth are shared fairly amongst our people and places.
- **Green**, to ensure that activity contributes to the 2045 goal of net zero carbon County Durham.

This document sets out the strategic framework to deliver this focus through the 5 Ps, on People, Productivity, Places, Promotion and Planet and 16 related priorities. Reflecting feedback through the process, Planet priorities are embedded into the other Ps, recognising the importance of Planet and net zero in all our activity and future plans.

The strategy is designed to steer and inform delivery; flexible to reflect changing economic circumstances, with actions that are updated and refreshed every few years. This doesn't start with a blank sheet of paper. There are already many examples of good work happening across the county. This document builds on what we are already doing as partners and our direction of travel for creating a step change.

The 2021 Economic Statement identified high level targets; by 2035 the county will bridge the gap with national performance across key measures around employment, unemployment, higher level skills, and higher-level occupations. Alongside this, we have developed measurements which we will use to guide delivery under each P.

Delivery through partnerships

The Inclusive Economic Strategy has been codeveloped with partners and will be delivered by a wide range of partners - businesses, community groups and key stakeholders, led by the County Durham Economic Partnership. We will also continue to work with our regional and national partners.

Having adopted the long-term vision and established a framework for achieving that vision through the 5 Ps and priorities, the next stage will be to working collaboratively to codevelop and deliver through a series of detailed Delivery Plans.

The use of a Delivery Plan approach throughout the vision period will enable regular reviews to respond to economic changes; allow priorities to be reassessed and recalibrated by future administrations; and actions to be refined based on whether outcomes are being achieved. This will ensure the Inclusive Economic Strategy remains a relevant and live document throughout its lifespan.

The accompanying Delivery Plan(s) will set out detailed actions which will deliver a step change for the county, with next steps, lead partners, timescales, funding routes and deliverability status. We have already received significant input from residents and business from the Big Econ-versation and through stakeholder engagement, which has informed this strategy and will inform delivery.

This is the start of our inclusive economic journey, one which will create more and better jobs in County Durham.

A Framework for more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy: The five Ps



Introducing the Inclusive Economic Strategy



Inclusive in development

Through the Big Econ-versation



Inclusive and green in design

Going beyond a traditional economic strategy



Inclusive in delivery

Delivered as a partnership

This is a strategy of our county, codeveloped by the County Durham Economic Partnership with residents, businesses, and the voluntary and community sector.

It focuses on inclusive growth. Inclusive growth is defined by the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission as ‘enabling as many people as possible to contribute to and benefit from growth’.¹ This can be socially, benefitting groups that may face high barriers to quality employment, and place-based by addressing inequalities between different geographies. Moving to a new model of inclusive growth means integrating economic and social policy and seeing investment in social infrastructure on the same level as investment in physical infrastructure.

This strategy is ambitious yet deliverable and realistic. It will address immediate and long-term opportunities and challenges, looking toward the 2035 economic vision. We will use this strategy as the vision and strategic framework to provide the social and physical infrastructure to match the aspirations of our communities and residents and deliver tangible change to people’s lives.

It builds on work that is already underway across the county and identifies areas for further focus that will bring about transformative changes. We will build on the good work already being done by partners across this county to deliver this strategy, focusing on the priorities and areas which can really make a difference to County Durham.

It aligns with existing strategies and plans in place across the county, including council documents such as the County Durham Plan, Climate Emergency Response Plan, Digital Strategy, the Durham 2025 UK City of Culture bid, recently adopted Poverty Action Plan, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan, plus regional strategies from the North East LEP. It does not describe everything that is happening in the county or replicate other documents.

This is about County Durham activity and where we have agency as a partnership, focusing on county-wide and place-based actions where it makes sense, rather than giving national or regional solutions.

We will codevelop with partners our Delivery Plan, which will include our first set of detailed actions to deliver a step change for the county, as well as other daughter strategies to deliver in detailed areas. This will build on and coordinate the project and programme ideas that we have collated from the Big Econ-versation and

¹ RSA (2017) Inclusive Growth Commission. Making our Economy Work for Everyone.

stakeholder engagement. We will consider and add transformational projects and programmes as our Delivery Plan is refreshed and updated.

Delivered as a Partnership

As the County Durham Economic Partnership, we will draw on our close links with our business community and anchor institutions to deliver shared goals and gather intelligence of what is needed to support business growth and success. We also work in partnership to promote our cultural and visitor economy sectors.

Across County Durham, 12 anchor institutions are part of the County Durham Procurement Family, working together through the County Durham Pound, to increase local spend, build capacity in our local businesses, develop strong, local supply chains, and support local businesses growth. There is also close working between Durham County Council and the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; we have a diverse voluntary and community sector that works to improve the lives of people in the county and support their communities, both by providing services and through volunteering opportunities.

We collaborate closely across the North East. There is potential to leverage the presence of our globally leading university and our colleges as anchor institutions to deliver the strategy, working with regional partners and communities on skills, economic development, place, culture and heritage, building on the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Durham County Council and Durham University

Alongside work with partners, we will build on our Big Econ-versation approach to create a Citizens' Panel, which brings together residents in a form of deliberative democracy, to allow residents and communities have a say in local decision making and direction setting around the inclusive economic strategy delivery plan.

Our roadmap for developing and delivering our Inclusive Economic Strategy



Economic performance



£8.8bn GVA
26.8% growth
(2006-20) (national:
49.6%)



168,500 jobs
3.7% growth (2010-
20) (national: 11.8%)



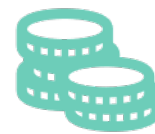
14,600 businesses
27.3% growth
(2010-21) (national:
33.8%)



**GVA per capita is
55.4% of the English
average**



**GVA per filled job
is 78.4% of the
England average**



**£28,259
median wages
(national: £31,490)**



533,100 residents
7.1% growth (2000-20)
(national: 14.3%)



**4.1%
unemployment
(national: 4.6%)**



**32%
NVQ Level 4+
(national: 42%)**

In 2021 we launched the [County Durham Economic Statement](#) following the Economic Review. The Statement set out headline economic strengths and challenges that form the foundations of this strategy. In particular it highlighted the county's lower prosperity with GVA per capita of £16,490, which is 55.4% of the national average (£29,757), and the importance of raising productivity in the country, addressing the growing gap of £1.6bn per annum between the county and national performance. It proposed that our high level targets seek to bridge the gap with national performance across key measures around employment, unemployment, higher level skills, and higher level occupations.

Below are some of the economic review's findings that have informed this strategy.

The economy today

Our economy has transformed over the past 3 decades and County Durham sits at the heart of the North East, with the biggest population and the strongest economic connectivity from the Tyne to the Tees. Many of our strategic employment sites are concentrated along the north to south axes of the A1(M) and A19 in the east of the county. Businesses in County Durham are part of multiple regional, national and international supply chains and we benefit from proximity to major growth centres including Teesside Freeport and the Darlington Economic Campus.

The county has high levels of employment with an unemployment rate of 4.2% compared to the 4.6% England average.² With strong road and rail links across the region, we have a highly connected labour market. At the time of Census 2011, almost 90,000 people commuted between County Durham and the rest of the North East. The employment pipeline is fuelled by the county's good quality schools where educational attainment is above the national average at Key Stage 4.³ We have four successful further education colleges at Derwentside College, New College Durham, East Durham College and Bishop Auckland College, alongside DurhamLearn (the adult learning and skills service), and are home to the North East Institute of Technology, which provides specialist training in construction, engineering, manufacturing and digital sectors.

The county has attracted new investment, delivering regional and national growth. This has been possible through the development of key emerging industries, strong strategic infrastructure, a range of employment sites and a connected labour market. The industrial economy remains a strength anchored by the large and productive manufacturing base. It is the largest source of full-time, well-paid jobs and the workforce productivity easily exceeds the national average.



25,000
jobs in advanced
manufacturing

The county is also set to capitalise on new subsectors and opportunities. Space & satellites, fintech and the green economy are emerging as new opportunities, which will in turn create new jobs for residents. We are the second highest renewable energy generator in the North East with strengths in geothermal energy and onshore wind,⁴ and are home to innovative businesses leading the way in sustainability.

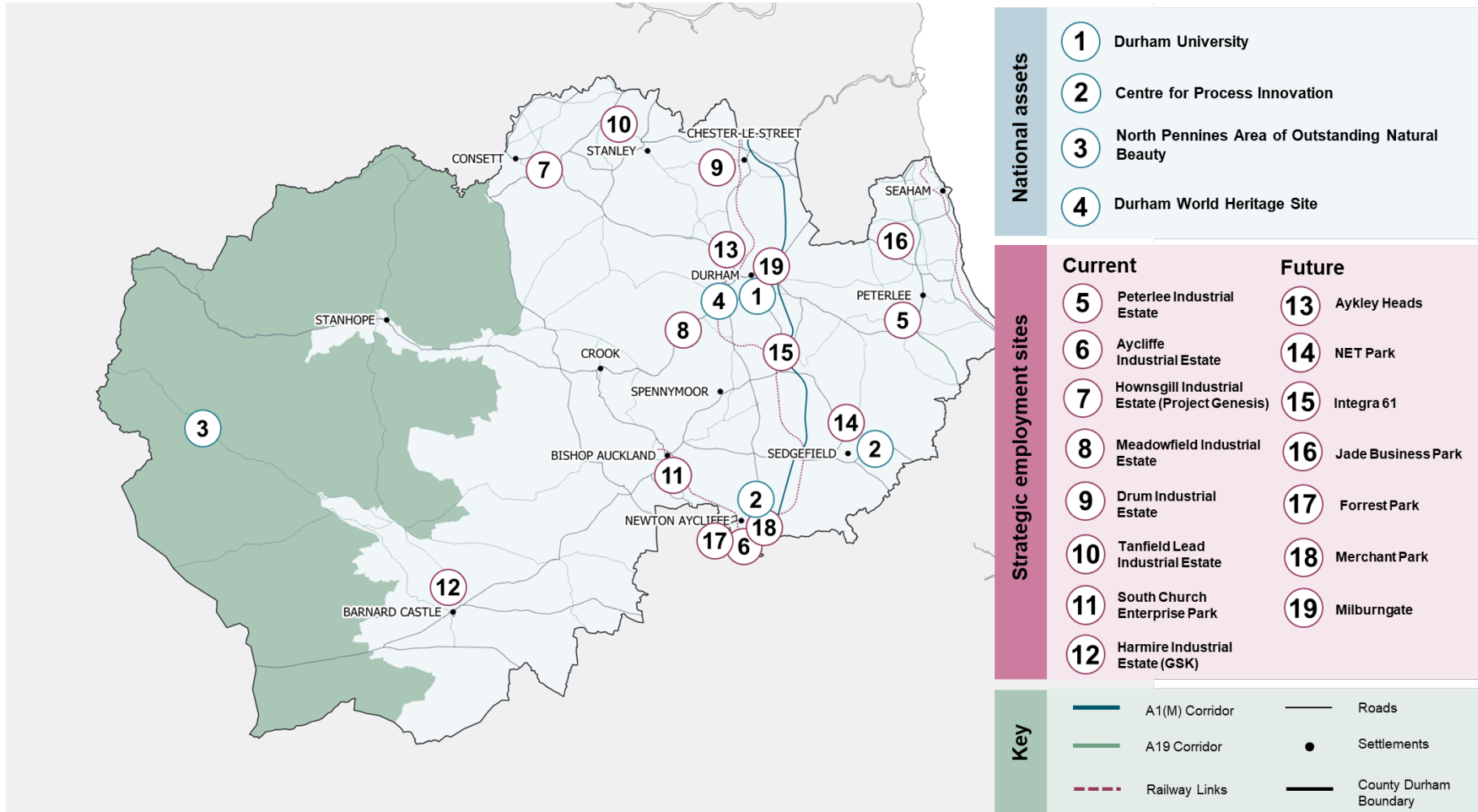
The county benefits from a number of major strategic employment sites. Aykley Heads, an attractive city centre business location primed for delivery next to Durham's main train station, is growing as a knowledge cluster, home to innovative businesses generating new ideas around technology and the service economy. The county is home to NETPark, a premier science park in Sedgefield, and some of the UK's leading innovation institutions, including the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI), as well as clusters in Durham City and Newton Aycliffe.

² ONS Annual Population Survey (2021)

³ ekosgen (March 2021) County Durham Economic Review Final Report

⁴ Durham County Council (2019) Climate Emergency Update Report

County Durham's national assets and strategic employment sites



Durham University, a major economic asset with a global reputation

Durham University contributes £489m GVA to the County Durham economy and is one of the county's major employers which supports over 8,000 jobs, and overall generates £1.9bn for the UK economy with over 17,000 jobs.⁵ Students and researchers from across the world are attracted to the university with 90% of its research rated as world-leading or internationally excellent⁶. The University is collaborating with academic institutions in the North East to develop regional research strengths and leads the Northern Accelerator programme which has transformed high-growth spinout activity across the regional universities. The University also provides strong support to graduate start-ups and works closely with local businesses and entrepreneurs to increase innovation.

Durham County Council and Durham University have agreed an ambitious MOU to strategically collaborate on delivering inclusive growth for the county, and will work together to:

- Encourage economic development by supporting the development of NETPark and Aykley Heads, driving innovation and productivity, catalysing start-ups and entrepreneurship, supporting inward investment activity, and generating social value and local supply chain opportunities
- Leverage research expertise to improve the quality of life for our communities and residents through collaborative and participative research, for instance in inclusive growth and public health and inequalities
- Develop and promote our culture and heritage offer, with partners, through joint strategic work, alignment of our offer with our research strengths, and developing festivals and cultural events
- Build sustainable communities for residents and maximising the opportunities for the University's activities to benefit the local community
- Ensure the needs of regional employers are clearly articulated to improve the ability for learning and skills provision to meet this demand, collaborating with regional education providers
- Raise the regional, national and international profile of County Durham, building key messages and joint approaches

⁵ BiGGAR Economics (2022) Economic Impact Assessment of Durham University

⁶ Research Excellence Framework impact quality score of 3*/4* (2021)

The health sector has a large employment base in the county which supports and ensures the well-being of our residents and communities. We have the highest number of jobs in life sciences and pharmaceutical manufacturing in the North East.⁷ This sector is a good source of employment opportunities across a broad range of skill levels, with continued high demand generating new job opportunities each year.



2,000 life science & pharma jobs and 25,000 in health and care



10,000+ jobs in tourism & supply chain



16m visitors and £827m spend

The arts, entertainment and recreation sector has been growing faster (50%) than the North East average (23%) between 2009 and 2019. Arts, culture and tourism sectors have huge growth potential, capitalising on the strong culture and heritage offer, beautiful countryside and coast, with the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Beauty.

County Durham is a large and mainly rural county – the 8th largest in the country by population – Durham City and our large towns act as major centres but two in five residents live in rural areas. The national shift to home and hybrid working is potentially transformative for the county in terms of land use and access to better quality jobs and wages. It has the potential to overcome transport issues, allow densification of office space so smaller footprints can support more jobs and economic activity, spreading spend across the county rather than focusing it in major employment sectors, improving quality of life and well-being impacts.

The county is growing, with housing and employment growth plans set out in detail in the County Durham Plan. Our abundant land supply is one of the key economic assets to facilitate this. Future growth prospects will seek to achieve sustainable growth which will benefit both urban and rural areas of the county, investing in our town and village centres and place-based regeneration while respecting the landscape and natural assets, ensuring they are providing quality environments for people to live and visit.

We are proud of the county’s progress, but we cannot stand still.

The past five years have seen the country face multiple shocks and change. High inflation is having wide ranging repercussions for energy and material prices. Businesses and communities have time and again proved resilient to change and external pressures; however, the recent pandemic, and UK wide energy price increases and financing pressures, provide a very real risk of drawing the county’s residents into poverty and constrain our businesses. Reduced consumer spend will impact local and town centre businesses who are reopening in the county after two years of disrupted trade. The Council’s recently adopted Poverty Action Plan provides a complementary strategy which will be vital in this tough economic environment.

⁷ Life sciences and pharmaceuticals – North East LEP Evidence Hub – Local Business; health and care - ekosgen (March 2021) County Durham Economic Review Final Report



1 in 4
jobs earn below the Real
Living Wage (UK:
20.2%)

Some places and people face long-term – sometimes intergenerational – barriers to employment, resulting in deprivation and inequality, primarily in the east and north of the county. Almost 1 in 4 jobs in the county earn below the Real Living Wage and an estimated 21% percent of households across the county live in relative poverty before housing costs.⁸ We have high levels of deprivation with 12% of neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived in the county.

Whilst the county is seeing low unemployment rates in 2022, economic inactivity levels are high, mainly driven by long-term health conditions, with 24,700 people economically inactive due to long-term health conditions and another 18,600 due to caring responsibilities.⁹ Average healthy life expectancy is 59, five years lower than the UK average, and this varies by 13 years across the county. This means on average our residents live 20 years in poor health and in the lowest performing neighbourhoods up to 25 years.¹⁰ This requires tackling the multiple barriers people face at the right time and in a joined-up way.



25%
neighbourhoods in the
most deprived 10% for
health

The majority of our businesses are micro, small and medium size employers. They are at risk of rising costs; after 2 years of pandemic trading conditions their resilience & cash flow to manage turbulent conditions may be reduced. Our successful manufacturing base (one of the largest employment sectors in the county) are heavy energy users and as global traders they face rising costs of doing business.



34% of £644m
budget spent in county
and 60% in North East

We are finding new ways to work together as partners to strengthen our local economy. Through the County Durham Pound, 12 partners across the county are working together to increase local spend, build capacity in local businesses, develop strong, local supply chains, and support business growth.

The county has good North-South connectivity however, some areas see limited public transport options or major roads, especially to some of our more rural areas. Our large, rural geography means residents are often reliant on cars for commuting, and the cost and availability of transport may be a barrier for access to work and training opportunities. Public transport networks are of key importance, connecting people to employment and services and allowing young people to access education at our good quality schools and colleges.

If we continue business as usual it's likely that the county will see some businesses, residents and places thriving, and others feeling left behind. This is not an inclusive model of growth; already the county's economy is growing slower than the national average, productivity and prosperity is lower and the gap is widening. It is vital that we join the dots between the areas that are doing well and close the gap with

⁸ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2020) Employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage. Based on the Living Wage Foundation's calculation of the Real Living Wage, which at the time was £9.30 outside of London.

⁹ ONS Annual Population Survey (2020)

¹⁰ Health deprivation – MHCLG Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019); ONS Life Expectancies (2018-20)

national performance in order to improve local wages, quality of life, health and wellbeing for all residents and parts of the county.

Our places

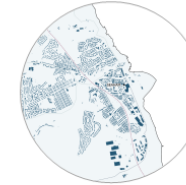
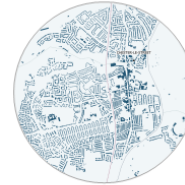
Stanley

Good accessibility across the county and to Gateshead and Newcastle. Major employment sites include Tanfield Lea Industrial Estate and Greencroft Industrial Park.



Chester-le-Street

Located on the River Wear and home of the Riverside Cricket Ground, with a rich history and heritage. Good transport links via the East Coast Mainline.



Seaham

A town on Durham's Heritage Coast with the sandy North Beach, Harbour Marina and beautiful coastal footpaths. Established business parks at Spectrum, Dawdon, Seaham Grange, and Jade in Murton.

Consett

On the edge of the Pennines and close to Durham City and Newcastle. Major employers include Swan, Erwin Hymer and Gardner Aerospace.



Durham City

One of the best cities in the world to visit (The Independent, 2020). Known for the World Heritage Site, University and firms in fintech and knowledge-intensive industries.



Peterlee

Overlooking the Durham limestone coast and rural farmland. Several major manufacturers are based there, including Caterpillar and ZF.

Stanhope

A market town at the heart of the Durham Dales, surrounded by moorland. A strong offer for visitors and walkers.



Sedgefield

Home to NETPark, one of the UK's premier science, engineering and technology parks, with two Catapult centres and three national innovation centres.



Crook

A market town with manufacturing heritage. The town centre has benefited from investment in Market Place and North Terrace.



Spennymoor

Well connected to Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside. Home to large employers including Thorn Lighting, Tridonic, Stanley Black and Decker, and Learning Curve.



Barnard Castle

A market town and tourism honeypot site in the Durham Dales, built around the medieval castle ruin. The main employment and service centre for Teesdale and home to GSK.



Newton Aycliffe

The largest town outside of Durham City, located close to Darlington. Home to the largest business park in the North East, manufacturers including 3M and Husqvarna, and the Hitachi Rail plant at Merchant Park.



Bishop Auckland

Located in the Vale of Durham. A growing tourist destination with Auckland Castle, the Food Festival and Kynren. Recent investment of £72.1m in the town.



What we heard in the Big Econ-versation

The Economic Partnership have taken a bold and inclusive approach to co-developing the strategy. We wanted a more creative way of engaging, starting with a conversation with business, residents, voluntary sector, and wider groups before a plan was developed, to really understand aspirations and opportunities. Over January to April 2022, we engaged with residents, businesses, young people, anchor institutions and partners through our Big Econ-versation. In September 2022 we undertook further engagement, asking residents for feedback on the strategic framework.

Our Big Econ-versation engaged with 70 organisations and over 1,500 people through 86 conversations across the county. In addition, 1,455 surveys were completed by residents, businesses, and young people. We heard about the issues people face as they seek to grow and prosper, we asked what people would prioritise in this strategy, and we listened to ideas for interventions and policy direction that will help drive economic growth.

Our residents said...	Our businesses said...	Our young people said...
<p>More good quality jobs</p> <p>and ensuring these are accessible to local people is a major priority.</p>	<p>A skilled workforce</p> <p>was viewed as the best way to improve productivity</p>	<p>54%</p> <p>said they could not or are unsure they could pursue their chosen career or business idea in the county</p>
<p>Public transport</p> <p>is a major priority and seen as a barrier to economic opportunities, especially in rural communities</p>	<p>Skills, digital & transport infrastructure</p> <p>was seen as the key to economic growth</p>	<p>Young people highlighted the need for better awareness of work experience & apprenticeships and more collaboration between businesses & education providers as important</p>
<p>“There has been a historic lack of investment in the area compared to other parts of the country.”</p>	<p>“My business is in County Durham because I am proud of where I live.”</p>	<p>“I don’t know where I want to live; it will depend on work opportunities but I’d like to stay in Durham near my family and friends.”</p>

The Big Econ-versation was widely promoted through press, social, digital and broadcast media. We engaged widely across the county through our existing partnerships and used digital and physical versions of the survey to make sure we reached as many groups as possible.

This has been an opportunity to capture the expectations and thoughts of residents, businesses and communities who will be able to benefit from the opportunities that economic growth will bring and to better understand the challenges faced as they seek to secure employment and embark on careers in the county.

In the Econ-versation we heard that...	By working in partnership, our strategy aims to...
County Durham needs more good quality jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and grow jobs in our opportunity and major sectors • Support more businesses to start and grow here • Encourage good business practices
Jobs need to be accessible to local people, through improved public transport, especially in rural and deprived areas, and inclusive skills provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it easier to use our bus services and explore different solutions to help people get around to employment sites in the county and wider region • Bring jobs closer to people by investing in digital infrastructure and our town and local centres • Provide residents with a better understanding of training and career pathways so they can gain the skills that local and regional businesses need
More needs to be done to market and promote the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a brand for County Durham to encourage people to visit, study, work and live in the county • Build a year round visitor economy based on our assets
Investment in places is needed county-wide, particularly in smaller towns and villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimagine our town and local centres by transforming unused retail units into space for cultural and creative enterprises, start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises. • Encourage people back into our town centres through events, leisure, and culture
Green economy and climate change is seen as an opportunity for growth, but this needs to protect jobs and not increase costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up and reskill residents to work in new green jobs • Equip businesses with the tools to transition to net zero

Our focus

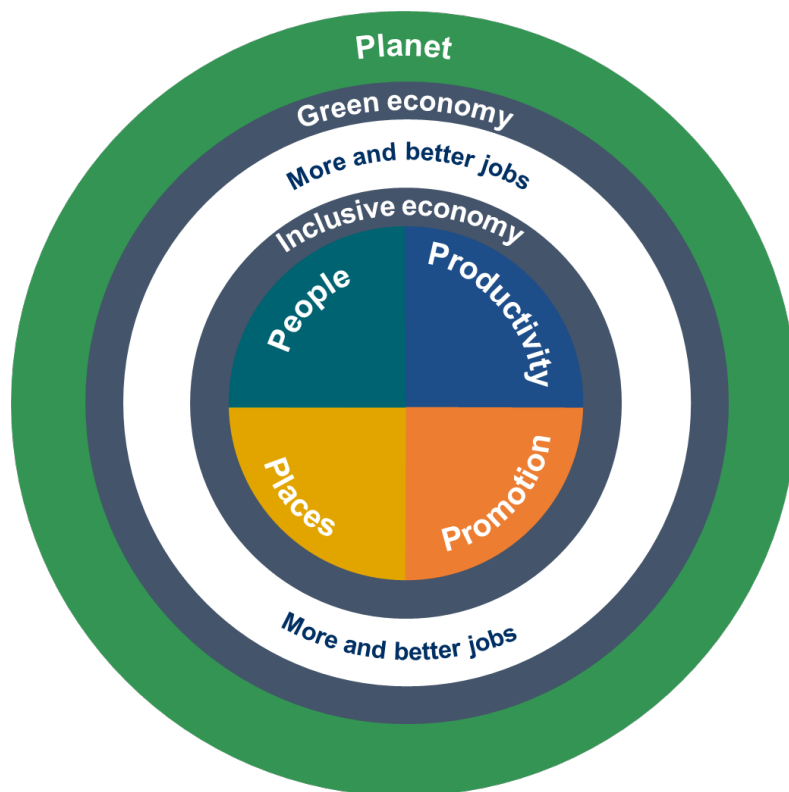
Our overarching focus for this strategy is to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy.

This means:

- **More jobs**, in the county’s broad business base
- **Better jobs**, to ensure that residents can access secure work that pays a living wage
- **Inclusive**, to ensure that the benefits of growth are shared fairly amongst our people and places
- **Green**, to ensure that activity contributes to the 2045 goal of net zero carbon County Durham

We have developed a strategic framework to co-ordinate delivery against our economic vision and ambition. This focuses on the five Ps: People, Productivity, Places, Promotion and Planet. It will be delivered through a sixth P: Partnerships.

Over the following pages Planet priorities are woven into the People, Productivity, Places, and Promotion chapters. This is to recognise the importance and cross cutting nature of planet in all our work.



DELIVERING OUR ECONOMIC VISION

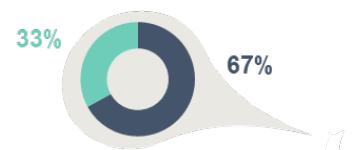
People

We will support people into education, training, jobs, and to excel in business and their careers.

The Delivery Plan will identify how we will work with training, education, health and employment providers to ensure that skills and training are completely aligned with the jobs and areas for growth identified in this strategy. A focus in improving the quality of intelligence will allow further education (FE), higher education (HE) and training providers to respond to evidenced local skills needs and target our residents furthest from the labour market. Below are the Partnership's People priorities.

Priority 1: Raise skills levels, including higher and green skills, directly targeted to what employers need

The county has high quality jobs already and these are likely to grow in our opportunity and major sectors, innovative businesses and public sector. Residents in County Durham have high aspirations; it is important that we harness this aspiration so that residents have the right skills that businesses need to enable them to access local and regional opportunities. Given our highly interconnected North East labour market, we also want our residents to have the maximum opportunity to access the wider regional opportunities from Tyne to Tees.



1 in 3 resident survey respondents reported that they have faced barriers to good skills training, jobs & career progression

We will:

- Align skills provision and training with County Durham and regional major employment and opportunity sectors to create routes into work and talent pipelines
- Provide a wide range of training routes for residents, including through schools, FE, apprenticeships and HE and ensure these are widely understood by young people to understand future skills pathways and working age residents
- Enable FE, HE and training providers to respond to skills gaps and employer demands by improving the quality of intelligence on local skills needs
- Ensure that the skills system responds to residents with lower skills levels and communities furthest from the labour market
- Refresh and update a Skills Strategy for the county, defining its purpose and how it will be developed and delivered through the Delivery Plan

Priority 2: Overcome barriers into employment, including work readiness, skills, improved careers advice and guidance, and addressing poor health

Some residents require bespoke support to access employment opportunities – this requires a joined-up response that may go beyond traditional employment support to address barriers such as connectivity, health, or caring responsibilities. This will enable more residents to become economically active. Young people highlighted the importance of raising awareness of the opportunities available in the county – many knew what they wanted to do in the future but were unsure if the opportunity was available in the county. This is a barrier we need to unblock.

We will:

- Target residents with specific and often intergenerational barriers to employment and unlock employment opportunities in the county, for instance by exploring initiatives such as an intermediate labour market (specially created jobs) and ringfencing
- Develop a countywide approach to Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance, raising awareness of training and career pathways and opportunities in our major employment and opportunity sectors, working with young people from primary education age upwards
- Respond to new ways of accessing services through a network of physical and virtual integrated employment and skills services hubs

43% young people

who responded to the survey were unsure that they could get their future job or start a business in the county

Approx. one quarter of disabled survey respondents work full-time, compared to over half of non-disabled respondents

Priority 3: Increase in-work progression and upskilling linked to new opportunities

Our businesses perform well at offering on and off the job training relative to other places. As the labour market changes, with increased use of technology and new green skills, up & reskilling and progression opportunities will enable people to access higher earnings and increase productivity. For example, housing retrofit is a near time opportunity to improve the quality of our older housing stock, lower household bills, create new jobs, and to link these to residents through up & reskilling.

We will:

78% businesses

who filled in the survey saw training the county’s workforce as important or very important for driving economic growth (most common answer)

- Respond to skills and labour demands in the health and care sector, a major employer offering quality employment across a broad range of skill levels, by advancing skills and employment pathways
- Ensure that employers can understand and diagnose their skills and training requirements to empower their workforce and support the productivity and growth of their business
- Promote lifelong learning and progression opportunities for residents linked to new technology and jobs, for instance in the green and digital economy

Priority 4: Ensure good health and wellbeing leads to economic inclusion

Improving health outcomes will reduce inequalities and barriers to economic participation, increase productivity and decrease the frequency of days lost to sickness. This effects too many residents and places in the county; better linking economy and health policy and delivery could have a transformational impact. In 2021/22, nationally, 17.0m days were lost to work related stress, depression and anxiety¹¹, with the Covid-19 pandemic having had a negative impact on mental health and social isolation.¹²

We will:

- Work with employers to build and maintain healthy workplaces, including active transport for commuting journeys
- Ensure that the health and economy agendas continue to be aligned and work together to deliver positive outcomes for all, building on existing good practice such as where embedded mental health practitioners working alongside job coaches
- Champion public sector service providers to improve individual and community health and wellbeing outcomes through better data sharing and joint working

Links to Planet

Delivering our ambition for more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy by reaching net zero by 2045 through a just transition that creates good jobs.

- Promoting green skills and jobs pathways within the countywide Careers priority, with a focus on preparing young people for careers at an early stage

¹¹ HSE (2022) Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain 2022 using Labour Force Survey data

¹² Durham County Council (2020) A framework for good workforce mental health in County Durham businesses

Our delivery plan will be measured through improvements in:

- Residents with high level skills
- Residents who are economically inactive but want a job
- Residents in employment
- 18-24 year old residents in employment
- Disabled residents in employment
- Healthy life expectancy of residents
- Gross Value Added per capita
- Employee jobs earning Real Living Wage of higher

Productivity

We will support business innovation, growth, and higher levels of productivity

The Delivery Plan will build on the extensive work already underway locally and regionally, working with businesses and representative organisations to understand how and where the Partnership can add value, support the existing business base and create new opportunities for businesses to start and move to the county. These opportunities must be linked to our residents through the People priorities, ensuring that new jobs are created, and residents and young people are given the best chance of accessing those jobs, and our Places priorities, ensuring the infrastructure is ready to support business needs – for example land and digital connectivity. Below are the Partnership’s Productivity priorities.

Priority 1: Harness the power of our major employment sectors and accelerate our opportunity sectors

The infographic consists of three main elements: a blue box on the left, a green box in the middle, and a text block on the right. The blue box contains the text: 'Many businesses surveyed see manufacturing as a future growth sector, highlighting green, renewables and electric vehicles'. The green box contains a quote: '“The opportunities in skilled manufacture for the green economy are enormous”'. To the right of the green box, the text reads: 'Opportunities for growth for businesses in the survey'.

County Durham has a well-performing manufacturing and engineering sector, large health and care sector and growing visitor economy. Their growth is important to our economy, providing good quality jobs for residents and supply chain opportunities for local businesses. Alongside this County Durham has growing strengths in the green economy, space, advanced material electronics, life sciences, creative & cultural and high growth service sub-sectors, such as fintech. Developing clusters and specialisms in these sectors – linked to the wider North East - has the potential to create high-quality jobs and increase productivity, creating opportunities for inward investment and innovation. Together these will create more and better jobs in the county.

We will:

- Promote identified high growth opportunity sectors through targeted inward investment and skills and training, showcasing career opportunities to young people and attracting entrepreneurs to the region
- Foster collaboration and attract more businesses and investment in our specialisms by linking in to, and in taking a lead in, regional and national sector and ecosystem support networks and building multifaceted peer-to-peer networks (for example across our green economy)
- Support our SMEs to grow through access to supply chain and exporting opportunities, and ensure that SMEs are linked into university research to unlock new product and process innovation

- Support cluster development by ensuring new and small businesses in opportunity sectors have access to finance, high quality incubation, coworking and flexible space in identified locations
- Promote our research and business strengths, such as around geothermal, to attract and secure funding to the county

Priority 2: Provide excellent support at all stages for businesses to start-up, sustain, thrive and grow in County Durham

Lack of finance and low innovation

seen as barriers to trade and growth for businesses surveyed

We will strengthen our economy by increasing the number of start-ups and encouraging business growth and business investment in the county. We have fewer businesses than expected for a population the size of County Durham (441 businesses per 10,000 working age residents), compared to the national average at (683 per 10,000).¹³ This priority will look to address this, creating more jobs and

opportunities in all parts of the county across the business base and sectors, including amongst female entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses.

We will:

- Ensure businesses have access to a ‘single front door’ to access the business support they need at the right time, from marketing to access to finance to exporting advice
- Attract investors to work with the county to invest and grow the business and enterprise base, including alternative business models
- Promote networking and collaboration, bringing together businesses and partners within and across sectors to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth
- Explore innovative ways to encourage entrepreneurship and enterprise in local communities

Priority 3: Expand the thriving innovation ecosystem

The county has a growing knowledge economy and innovation assets including Durham University, NETPark and CPI, as well as sectoral and spatial clusters of innovative businesses. This doesn’t sit in isolation, and is a vital part of a growing North East innovation ecosystem. We will build on and further develop the innovation ecosystem to support product and process innovation across the whole business base, sustained by skills, access to finance, business support, private sector networks and the necessary facilities that make up a thriving ecosystem.

¹³ Note this this does not capture our many micro-entrepreneurs and sole traders who are not VAT/PAYE registered).

We will:

- Build a leading UK innovation district, capitalising on existing spatial assets to create a corridor stretching from Durham City to NETPark
- Maximise the county's role in national R&D funding and programmes, ensuring that entrepreneurs and business understand the breadth and depth of support available
- Increase the level of start-ups and spin-outs that start and grow in the county, through more accelerator programmes and wider support

Priority 4: Drive good business practices, including improving health in the workplace

All the county's employers have an important role to play in creating a more inclusive economy with better outcomes for our residents. This includes through valuing and rewarding the workforce, investing in training, development and in-work career progression, promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace, and demonstrating social responsibility. This can increase retention, wellbeing and productivity. There is a link between productivity and workforce health. Research by the Northern Health Science Alliance estimates that 30% of the productivity gap between the Northern Powerhouse and rest of England is due to ill-health.¹⁴ This priority will build awareness and the case for change with local employers, to ensure that all local jobs are better jobs.

We will:

- Build on the existing County Durham Pound collaboration to strengthen our role as a national leader in community wealth building to support thriving communities and local economies by leveraging the collective power of local anchor partners, including continuing to use our spend to support local supply chains, and exploring our role as employers and the use of our land and assets
- Encourage good practices across our diverse business base, including wages, training, job security, social value, and health and wellbeing, potentially through a Good Employment Charter
- Explore the impact and opportunities to raise wage levels and productivity by setting up a living wage taskforce

Links to Planet

Delivering our ambition for more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy by reaching net zero by 2045 through a just transition that creates good jobs.

We will:

- Develop a Green Park with Enterprise Zone status
- Encourage the adoption of circular economy approaches amongst businesses

¹⁴ Bambra, Munford, Brown et al (2018) Health for Wealth: Building a Healthier Northern Powerhouse for UK Productivity. Newcastle: Northern Health Science Alliance.

- Build the retrofit evergreen fund to support more businesses to adapt their premises

Our delivery plan will be measured by improvements in:

- Number of jobs and proportion of higher level jobs
- Number of green jobs
- Job density
- Number of businesses
- Gross Value Added
- Gross Value Added per filled job
- County Durham Procurement Family budget spent in the county

Places

We will improve places and plan infrastructure so that people and businesses can access opportunities

The Delivery Plan will focus on how we will unlock the economic potential of all our places, working alongside the County Durham Plan, which sets out future employment and housing land requirements and locations. There will be work to do on strategy and delivery – particularly around connectivity and inward investment – and this will involve local partners alongside regional and national agencies. These opportunities must be linked to existing and new businesses through the Productivity priorities, with our assets promoted through the Promotion priorities, ensuring that businesses, visitors, residents, and investors understand the excellent opportunities and assets available in the county. Below are the Partnership's Places priorities.

Priority 1: Build vibrant and diverse towns and villages

We have an opportunity to build on existing investment in many of our towns, local centres and rural areas, recognising their distinctive opportunities and challenges. Housing is a major enabler to achieving economic growth and better social outcomes for our communities. The council has committed to build over 24,800 new homes of mixed type, size and tenure between 2016 and 2035; alongside this housing growth we need to actively engage our communities to consider the role of town and local centres in the new economic context, create thriving mixed use centres alongside new homes, and increase footfall in thriving local centres.

70% businesses

surveyed thought creating & maintaining vibrant town centres was very important or important to economic growth

93% resident survey respondents

rated improving town centres as important or very important (the top priority for the future), emphasising fewer vacant shops

We will:

- Explore the economic role of each of our towns, independently and as a network across the county, to enhance their unique character and attractions and improve digital and physical accessibility as places to live, work, study and visit
- Expand the leisure, culture and event offer, building from the ideas that arose from the UK City of Culture bid alongside the local food economy
- Develop innovative approaches to repurpose vacant retail units into flexible space for start-ups, small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Ensure that housing is used as an economic enabler, supporting SME contractors and supply chains to deliver homes for our future, embedding new low carbon construction methods and improving energy efficiency in new homes, industrial and commercial premises

Priority 2: Unlock employment land for high quality premises

A challenge of being in the county for businesses surveyed

“Finding suitable premises that are central and accessible”

Our opportunity and major employment sectors highlight the need for high quality employment space to attract and retain more businesses. The County Durham Plan sets out where this growth can go – this strategy supports that, focusing on building the concentration of businesses in clusters and on business parks, creating more and better jobs.

We will:

- Attract international headquarters, research and innovation, and support growth in fintech, life sciences and digital services, focused on growth locations such as the Aykley Heads development
- Deliver phase 3 of NETPark, providing up to 270,000 sq ft of new laboratory, office production and storage space, allowing for science, engineering and technology companies to grow, scale up and commercialise their operations
- Take early advantage of new investment opportunities in our major employment and opportunity sectors by developing an economic growth and investment pipeline for the county
- Encourage innovation and enterprise in our rural communities by supporting rural diversification

Priority 3: Improve physical connectivity between places in the county

70% residents surveyed think there is good access to road links & 80% who travel to work go by car vs 5% by public transport



For too many people and places connectivity is a barrier to better jobs. The majority of those surveyed said they travel to work by car; this needs changing in order to deliver our net zero ambitions. Given our interconnected labour market, we need to think about

travel within the county and also travel to other parts of the North East. Improved connectivity will be vital for business trade and for people to get to work, particularly for shift workers, those on low wages, young people, and people & businesses in rural areas. It is important that this is inclusive; transport improvements need to be affordable and frequent, creating a multi-hub county which is accessible to all.

We will:

- Carry out an in-depth piece of work led by the Council on developing further solutions to physical and digital connectivity through a Connectivity Strategy

- Explore innovative solutions, such as demand responsive transport, low / no cost electric bike rentals, electric vehicle car clubs and e-bike hubs
- Develop a plan for commercial operators to transition to electric bus fleets, building on the electrification of Park and Ride
- Encourage modal shift to public transport and behaviour change, both within the county and for residents to commute across the region, such as through the delivery of fares initiatives, ticketing and subsidised fares, as well as by utilising Council planning guidance to encourage delivery of sustainable transport options
- Deliver on our carbon emission targets by reducing the volume of freight on the road by supporting the development of an intermodal rail freight interchange

Priority 4: Enhance digital infrastructure and connectivity

High-quality digital infrastructure is essential for productivity. It helps attract businesses, supporting sectors such as fintech. It also is important for inclusivity, enabling residents can access training and employment. Recently trends towards home and hybrid working in some sectors and roles require stable and fast connections. There is currently a lack of fast and reliable broadband in the county, where 53.1% of premises have access to ultrafast broadband compared to 71.5% nationally, with poor connectivity particularly in rural areas¹⁵. There is high risk of digital exclusion in parts of Chester-le-Street, Seaham, Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe, and south of Barnard Castle. Supporting home and hybrid working by improving digital connectivity will open up access to more and better paid jobs across the county, particularly in areas difficult to reach by public transport.

We will:

- Create digitally enabled towns and villages to increase technology uptake, encourage innovation, and improve access to digital services and skills by exploring initiatives such as municipal data networks and digital community hubs, and the adoption of innovative new technologies, including 5G and next generation satellites
- Hardwire digital connectivity and inclusion considerations in regeneration and development projects

Links to Planet

Delivering our ambition for more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy by reaching net zero by 2045 through a just transition that creates good jobs.

We will:

- Promote Durham as a compact county by exploring the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Encourage biodiversity and protecting nature by enhancing green space and supporting woodland expansion and urban greening

¹⁵ Durham County Council.

Our delivery plan will be measured by improvements in:

- Proportion of neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived nationally
- Town centre vacancy rate
- Public transport connectivity
- Employment land take-up
- Occupancy rate of council business premises
- Properties with gigabit-capable broadband

Promotion

We will promote our county, assets and opportunities to businesses, investors, visitors, developers and residents.

The Delivery Plan will build on the wide range of work ongoing around culture and visitor economy. We know that we have excellent tourism assets and economic opportunities in the county. The priority now is to showcase this to the world, ensuring that we capitalise on the work underway through the Productivity and Place Priorities. Below are the Partnership’s Promotion priorities.

Priority 1: Develop a clear brand and place marketing



People are proud of the county – our cultural, heritage and natural assets – and think this should be better known regionally and nationally. We are home to a wide range of businesses and lead the North East for employment in advanced manufacturing and health & life sciences. We have an abundance of land and strong natural, cultural and heritage assets. This is a strong

foundation for marketing and investment. There’s an opportunity to capitalise on this through a strong brand and county narrative for residents, tourists, and inward investors.

We will:

- Build the County Durham Brand, aligned with the distinctive strengths, assets and opportunities identified in this strategy
- Grow our profile as a major destination for innovation, business and investment by attracting academic and business conferences and events, aligned to our major employment and opportunity sectors and research strengths

Priority 2: Attract more inward investment in the sectors and places it makes sense

The county already sees inward investment interest and this strategy sets out the sectors we have an opportunity to grow, our innovation potential, and the employment land assets. We need to develop a clear pitch for business attraction and expansion that attracts more and better jobs to help retain local talent and attract more highly skilled workers into the county.

We will:

- Develop a new strategic approach to inward investment, aligned to our major employment and opportunity sectors, promoting our strategic national and international sites and assets, attracting corporate R&D headquarters and supporting innovative SMEs

- Capitalise on our role at the heart of the North East by considering developing a regional Internationalisation Strategy promoting our sectoral strengths in energy and advanced manufacturing, tourism, trade and international investment, and maximising our links to international gateways in the Port of Tyne, Newcastle Airport, and Teesport

Priority 3: Grow a year-round visitor economy

The county is home to some of the country’s best natural assets, from coast, to countryside, heritage city and culture. This is an opportunity to capitalise on these strengths to grow the tourism and culture offer and positively impact our productivity and economic growth. We want to encourage people to stay longer and visit more parts of the county by investing in technology, physical assets, and events where it is needed.

We will:

- Maximise the potential of all places as visitor destinations by ensuring that they have the right infrastructure to meet their needs, such as accommodation, attractions and leisure facilities
- Improve productivity in the culture, heritage and leisure offer in the county by using new technologies, for instance 5G and digital

Tourism

identified as a future growth sector by businesses in the survey

Priority 4: Enhance cultural and creative infrastructure

We have growing strengths in culture and the creative sector. As part of the North East Screen Industries Partnership, Durham County Council and all the local authorities in the North East, signed an MOU with the BBC to attract new TV and film production to the county and North East, showcasing our natural beauty, warm people and providing new jobs across the sector. Culture has the potential to play an important role in revitalising our town and local centres. This requires investment in the sector, existing and new assets, and skills.

We will:

- Strengthen our asset base and capacity by delivering capital projects, including Riverbanks, Millennium Place and the transformation of the Durham Light Infantry Museum
- Deliver an ambitious county-wide cultural programme as a legacy of shortlisted UK City of Culture bid
- Strengthen the resilience of our communities through citizen-led cultural and community projects

75% residents

in the survey thought more could be done to attract tourists – better transport & town centres, more events & a stronger cultural offer, place promotion, and clean, safer streets

Links to Planet

Delivering our ambition for more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy by reaching net zero by 2045 through a just transition that creates good jobs.

We will:

- Encourage active travel as part of the visitor economy offer

Our delivery plan will be measured by improvements in:

- Visitor expenditure
- Number of visitors
- Number of inward investment projects secured and value

Delivering our Strategy

The Inclusive Economic Strategy is an ambitious economic strategy to 2035. It sets out our vision for a new economic future and has a clear focus on how we will deliver this through more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy. It will create a strong identity for the county, develop our strengths, address inequalities, and better connect residents to existing and new opportunities. This could have enormous positive impact both locally and for the UK economy.

To make it a reality will require new ways of working, through close collaboration, and shared funding from us all as partners. The shift (and reduced funding) as we move to UK Shared Prosperity Fund requires us to think differently to build the resources we need to deliver this long term strategy. This means that as a county we need to leverage as much external investment as possible through bids into relevant funding calls, by attracting private sector investment, and by creating the conditions for local growth and investment. The Council is able to tailor programmes and use funding to achieve the ambition and priorities set out in this strategy.

Our track record of delivery

Through the delivery of the Inclusive Economic Strategy, we will build on our strong track record of delivery across skills, business support, regeneration, delivery of employment sites, culture and heritage, and net zero transition. The examples below highlight the transformational impact our projects and programmes have had on the economy and communities of County Durham.

<p>Durham Advance: 1,500 working age people with health conditions and / or aged over 50 supported, with almost 700 moving into employment or self employment</p>	<p>Towns and Villages Programme: £25+m committed and £26m from other sources, following £38m investment in town centres in the last 10 years</p>	<p>Cultural Events: 185,000+ people attended events in 2021/22 including Lumiere, Seaham and Bishop Auckland food festivals and Durham Book Festival</p>
<p>County Durham Growth Fund: £9.7m grants awarded. Currently engaging with 59 businesses which are forecast to create 800 new jobs</p>	<p>Integra 61: Phase 1 completed with Amazon occupying a 2.1m sq. ft. unit at a cost of circa £150m, providing around 1,600 jobs</p>	<p>Business Energy Efficiency Project: Almost 500 small businesses supported to cut carbon emissions and energy costs, saving 2,500+ tonnes of CO2.</p>

<p>NETPark: A nationally significant science park with 2 innovation Catapults, 3 national innovation centres and full occupancy</p>	<p>LINKCD: 900+ participants aged 18+ given job support with 260+ moving into employment or self-employment</p>	<p>Finance Durham: £10.2m evergreen investment invested in 21 companies in the first 5 years, leveraging a further £32.3m of investment and supporting 224 new jobs</p>
--	--	--

2035 Targets

Our overall ambition is to support the creation of more and better jobs across the county. Bridging the performance gap in the employment and unemployment rates will lead to more than 10,000 more residents in work. Supporting residents to achieve higher level skills and occupations will lead to productivity improvements, wage growth, and new business opportunities across the county and more innovation. It will also make the county’s economy more stable and more resistant to future economic recessions. It is proposed that our high level target is to bridge the gap with national performance across the following key measures.

Employment - County Durham’s employment rate is typically 2 to 3 percentage points below the national average and a little above the regional average. Over the last 3-5 years the employment rate has averaged around 72%.

Unemployment - County Durham’s unemployment rate is typically around one percentage point higher than the national rate but around 0.5 percentage points lower than the regional rate. Over the last 3-5 years the rate has averaged around 5.5% but tends fluctuate.

Higher level skills - County Durham has a far lower proportion of residents with higher level skills than the national average. This means that residents have lower wages and less disposable income, are less able to secure higher-level jobs, and are less innovative than the national average. This significantly affects the overall performance of the economy. Furthermore, this gap between the County’s performance and national rates is growing.

High level occupations - Similar to the County’s skills profile, we have a lower proportion of higher level jobs; those requiring a high level of skill, education, and experience. Correspondingly, we also have a high proportion of routine jobs, which are particularly at risk of being automated in the medium to long-term future. Lower level jobs are also more at risk during economic recessions and downturns and may involve zero hour contracts where work is less secure.

Delivery Plan

Our next steps are to develop a detailed Delivery Plan and a monitoring framework to deliver against our strategy. The Economic Partnership will engage stakeholders, residents and communities, including Community Champions and Area Action Partnerships, in decision-making and coproduction of relevant actions and initiatives.

Supporting all residents in our inclusive economy

Through this strategy, we will continue to work with our strong business base, innovation assets, high-skilled workers, and graduates, but our strategy goes beyond a traditional economic approach – enabling everywhere and everyone in County Durham to contribute to and benefit from economic growth.

As part of the development of a Delivery Plan, we will identify where help is needed to create an inclusive economy and focus activity, target our actions, and monitor success on those groups. This does not mean that they will be the only beneficiaries of this strategy. Rather, we recognise that alongside the broad support and activity this strategy will generate, there are some people and places who may need additional support. In this way we will make this strategy – and the growth and prosperity it generates – inclusive for all.

Some of these groups will be place-based and others will be based on socio-economic or demographic groups. These will be reviewed every two years to ensure that we are still targeting activity in a way that will achieve maximum impact. These will be identified through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. We will work with different partners already engaged in activity to encourage participation.

This may include, for example:

- 16 neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation
- Residents earning below the Real Living Wage
- Households in fuel poverty or living in energy inefficient homes
- Residents with a long-term physical or mental health conditions
- Groups furthest from the labour market, either demographic e.g., Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, or socio-economic e.g., young people or older residents not in work, residents with low skills levels, residents with disabilities / learning difficulties
- Reflecting differences in life opportunities and experiences, for instance due to gender or ethnicity

Monitoring progress

We want to monitor our progress in delivering more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy. We will take a bold and innovative approach to transforming our economy – trying new ideas and evaluating them to understand what works.

The table below summarises a set of high-level outcome measures that reflect the priorities in this strategy and will be used to monitor progress in the delivery plan. We will also link the metrics included in the Climate Emergency Plan to monitor our progress in the Planet pillar.

As we codevelop the Delivery Plan with our partners, we will develop a set of impact measures to quantify the difference the strategy is making to illustrate the impact it is having on our outcome measures.

We will baseline our current performance against aspirational targets of where we want to be and what we think good looks like. We will co-develop targets for 2035 and interim targets to enable progress to be measured year on year.

We will also monitor the success of our actions in improving outcomes amongst our inclusive economy groups.

Pillar	Outcome measures
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents with high level skills (NVQ Level 4 & 5) • Residents who are economically inactive but want a job • Residents in employment • 18-24 year old residents in employment • Disabled residents in employment • Healthy life expectancy of residents • GVA per capita • Employee jobs earning Real Living Wage or higher
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs • Proportion of higher-level jobs • Number of green jobs • Job density • Number of businesses • GVA • GVA per filled job • County Durham Procurement Family budget spend in the county
Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of neighbourhoods in the most 10% most deprived nationally • Town centre vacancy rate • Public transport connectivity • Employment land take up • Occupancy rate of council business premises • Properties with gigabit-capable broadband
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor expenditure • Number of visitors • Number of inward investment projects secured and value
Planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to metrics included in the Climate Emergency Plan

Next steps

We are incredibly grateful to the individuals, communities and organisations who have been part of the development of this strategy. This is only the first step on our inclusive economic journey.

We invite you to be part of turning this into a reality now, identifying where and how you want to be involved in delivery. We will be setting up the Citizen Panel to ensure that residents have their say throughout, and the Economic Partnership will work with the broad partner base to codevelop actions.

We've already achieved so much in the county. This strategy sets out our path for the next decade and how we will, in 2035, be a sustainable, inclusive economy with a diverse range of jobs to meet all skill levels, with targeted training and learning programmes tailored to our employment specialisms and needs of business.

Annex

The strategy contains a short explanation of what we mean by more and better jobs in and inclusive, green economy. Below is a fuller definition.

More jobs, in the county's broad business base. This means creating the conditions for more businesses to start, move, and grow in all parts of the county, providing advice and guidance, access to finance, unlocking employment land, and investing in digital and physical infrastructure and places so that people can work closer to where they live. We will capitalise on our heritage, cultural and natural assets to grow our visitor economy, and we will promote the county widely to attract more businesses, investment, and visitors. This also brings an opportunity to attract more people to live here as digital and remote working increase.

Better jobs, to ensure that residents can access secure work that pays a living wage. This is for jobs within the county, where we are already home to the highest number of advanced manufacturing and health & life sciences jobs in the North East, alongside growing clusters in areas such as green energy and fintech. We will also support residents with skills & training opportunities and transport options to access jobs across the wider region. We believe all jobs can be better jobs, and we will work with employers to ensure that they are supported into better work practices such as stable shift patterns, guaranteed minimum hours, in work training and health & wellbeing support.

Inclusive, to ensure that the benefits of growth are shared fairly amongst our people and places. There are inequalities across our county, for example in health, education, connectivity, skills and employment. This strategy will focus on barriers that residents face to employment, from skills to transport to health, addressing the inequality experienced between and within some of our places. The strategy will focus on the city, towns, rural, and coast for attracting investment and creating better jobs in all parts of the county. We will identify place-based and socio-economic 'Inclusive Economy Cohorts' as part of the Delivery Plan, to ensure that we maximise the impact of the strategy and its actions effectively to target the people and places that need them the most.

Green, to ensure that activity contributes to the Climate Emergency and 2045 goal of net zero carbon County Durham. We will capitalise on our green economy businesses and the innovation assets in the county and wider region. This will create more high-quality jobs for residents, and support all to reach net zero without putting increased costs on individuals and businesses, protecting jobs and workers. The Climate Emergency Plan sets out how we need to be at the forefront of the clean, green, industrial revolution. This strategy needs to complement these plans by investing in people, technologies, research and development, and business.

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.



dio



Large print

countydurhampartnership@durham.gov.uk